IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of managing at least one collaborative process performed in accordance with a first entity and at least a second entity, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining information associated with the at least one collaborative process used to design and develop a given product; and

based on at least a portion of the obtained information, dynamically maintaining an information structure in the form of a context pyramid structure representative of the collaborative process so as to assist at least one of the first entity and the second entity in managing at least a portion of the collaborative process;

wherein the context pyramid structure provides a representation of the status of the collaborative process including one or more global and local tasks, and comprises results of a time offset calculation, a checkpoint calculation and a potential energy level calculation for the one or more global and local tasks involved in the collaborative process.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of incorporating annotated business data into the information structure.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of incorporating annotated design data into the information structure.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of controlling data flow associated with the at least one collaborative process based on the information structure.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of fetching one or more design data features for at least one of monitoring and tracking the at least one collaborative process.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one collaborative process is a business process.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one collaborative process is an engineering design process.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the information structure is multi-dimensional.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the information structure is multi-resolution.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the obtained information comprises annotated data.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the obtained information comprises user input.

13. (Canceled).

14. (Canceled).

15. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of analyzing at least one of the obtained information and the information structure.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of generating one or more action representations based on the analyzing step.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the analyzing step is rule-based.

18.   (Currently amended) Apparatus for managing at least one collaborative process performed in accordance with a first entity and at least a second entity, the apparatus comprising:

a memory; and

at least one processor coupled to the memory and operative to: (i) obtain information associated with the at least one collaborative process used to design and develop a given product; and (ii) based on at least a portion of the obtained information, dynamically maintain an information structure in the form of a context pyramid structure representative of the collaborative process so as to assist at least one of the first entity and the second entity in managing at least a portion of the collaborative process, wherein the context pyramid structure provides a representation of the status of the collaborative process including one or more global and local tasks, and comprises results of a time offset calculation, a checkpoint calculation and a potential energy level calculation for the one or more global and local tasks involved in the collaborative process.

19. (Currently amended) An article of manufacture for managing at least one collaborative process performed in accordance with a first entity and at least a second entity, comprising a ~~machine~~ computer readable storage medium containing one or more programs which when executed implement the steps of:

obtaining information associated with the at least one collaborative process used to design and develop a given product; and

based on at least a portion of the obtained information, dynamically maintaining an information structure in the form of a context pyramid structure representative of the collaborative process so as to assist at least one of the first entity and the second entity in managing at least a portion of the collaborative process;

wherein the context pyramid structure provides a representation of the status of the collaborative process including one or more global and local tasks, and comprises results of a time offset calculation, a checkpoint calculation and a potential energy level calculation for the one or more global and local tasks involved in the collaborative process.

20. (Currently amended) A method for providing a service, in accordance with a service provider, to manage at least one collaborative process performed in accordance with a first entity and at least a second entity, the method comprising the step of:

deploying a collaborative process management controller operative to: (i) obtain information associated with the at least one collaborative process used to design and develop a given product; and (ii) based on at least a portion of the obtained information, dynamically maintain an information structure in the form of a context pyramid structure representative of the collaborative process so as to assist at least one of the first entity and the second entity in managing at least a portion of the collaborative process, wherein the context pyramid structure provides a representation of the status of the collaborative process including one or more global and local tasks, and comprises results of a time offset calculation, a checkpoint calculation and a potential energy level calculation for the one or more global and local tasks involved in the collaborative process.